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SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD CARTER'S 1977 STRATEGIC WEAPONS DECISIO--ETC(U)
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1977 STRATEGIC WEAPONS DECISIONS.



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**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
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**SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD CARTER'S
1977 STRATEGIC WEAPONS DECISIONS**

by

Daniel S. Papp

31 July 1978

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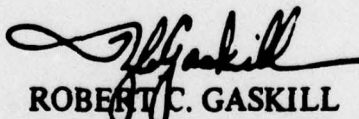
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FOREWORD

After first presenting an overview of the Soviet perception of President Carter, this memorandum examines the Soviet reaction to several of President Carter's 1977 strategic weapons decisions. The author concludes that the Kremlin's reactions to those decisions were conditioned by a number of factors including legitimate Soviet security concerns, the availability or nonavailability of roughly comparable systems within the Soviet arsenal, and, from the Soviet perspective, a resurgence of "reactionary elements" within the US political arena. He asserts that, in certain respects, the American decisions may have influenced the Soviet leadership to be more pliable in its bargaining positions, but have also opened possibilities for additional spirals in the strategic arms race.

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.



ROBERT C. GASKILL
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. DANIEL S. PAPP is currently on leave from his position as Associate Professor at Georgia Tech, and is serving as a Research Professor with the Strategic Studies Institute. A graduate of Dartmouth College, he received his doctorate in international affairs at the University of Miami's Center for Advanced International Studies. He spent much of last year as a visiting lecturer in Australia. Dr. Papp has published articles on Soviet foreign policy in a number of professional journals.

SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD CARTER'S 1977 STRATEGIC WEAPONS DECISIONS

Throughout much of the post-World War II era, American strategic weapons decisions have been rationalized as responses to a threatening Soviet strategic posture. When Harry Truman made his fateful decision to proceed with the development of the hydrogen bomb, he explained that his decision was based less on the desirability of creating the weapon than on the fear the Kremlin would develop it first. Ten years later, American ICBM deployment was accelerated in order to reduce the alleged "missile gap." Within 5 years of that decision, the fear that the Soviet Union had developed a credible antiballistic missile capability led American strategic planners to begin work on multiple reentry vehicles.

During the past year, many authorities have argued that ongoing Soviet strategic weapons programs again pose an increasingly large threat to the US nuclear deterrent, particularly the land-based ICBM's. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, for example, has maintained that the potential Soviet threat to these missiles will become a reality by the 1980's. To offset this threat, again according to Brown, "we will build and improve our forces as necessary."¹

Envisioned methods of improvement are numerous. During 1977, President Carter has made several decisions concerning the development

or improvement of American strategic weapons systems. These decisions have included, among others, continued production of the Minutemen III, installation of the Mark 12A warhead, cancellation of B-1 bomber production, acceleration of the development of the cruise missile, and continued emphasis on the MX mobile missile. While President Carter has strongly stressed his desire to reduce the size of nuclear arsenals, it is evident that he at the same time accepts at least some of the arguments of those who foresee a heightened Soviet strategic threat.²

From the American perspective, Carter's strategic weapons decisions may be viewed as simply new additions to the long line of strategic weapons decisions emerging from Soviet-American rivalry. This, however, is only part of the picture. Remembering that the Soviet strategic posture has been utilized as the rationale for American weapons improvements, it is reasonable to assume that similar considerations influence the Soviet Union. How, then, has the Soviet Union viewed Jimmy Carter's strategic weapons decisions, and what impact are these views likely to have on Soviet policies?³

THE SOVIET OVERVIEW OF JIMMY CARTER

Before the above questions can be accurately answered, it is first necessary to examine the Soviet perception of Jimmy Carter himself. Throughout much of his rise to national prominence, the Soviets considered Carter an enigma. By the time he won the Democratic nomination, however, a more distinct image of the candidate had emerged. For the most part, the Soviets depicted Carter as having three outstanding political characteristics.

Carter's reputation as an honest man and political outsider were continually linked by the Soviet media as the most prominent explanations for his amazing success.⁴ *Izvestia* observed that the American social climate offered certain advantages "to a little known outsider whose very lack of sophistication has the attractiveness of novelty." Carter had "realized this earlier and better than the other (candidates)," and had capitalized on it. *New Times* struck a similar chord, noting that Carter's "good natured provincial smile and reputation as an outsider" gave the Democratic leadership an "excellent opportunity to build up his (Carter's) image as an honest man."⁵ *Kommunist* took a similarly Machiavellian outlook, declaring that the revelations of Watergate, overseas payoffs, Vietnam, and CIA and FBI

excesses had eroded the masses' faith in the federal government so much that the Democratic leadership had sought an outsider to overcome this mistrust of Washington.⁶ All Soviet assessments agreed, however, that Carter was an "honest candidate."

A second major point leading to Carter's success was his allegedly vague position on policy. Carter's vagueness extended to both foreign and domestic policy, in Moscow's eyes, and enabled "conservatives to see him as a conservative, moderates to see him as a moderate, and liberals as a liberal."⁷

Carter's skill as a politician was a final source of strength. Basing his campaign on a "solid foundation of four years as governor" and "influential allies among local business and political circles," Carter had been "accepted by the establishment." The Georgian's support from the "giants" of the business world "differ(ed) little from other candidates."⁸

Despite Carter's allegedly vague policy pronouncements, the Kremlin found enough clarity to criticize them. This was particularly true of Carter's foreign policy positions. While Moscow believed that the Democratic nominee basically supported detente, the Soviet leadership observed that he at the same time held some positions "which put you on your guard."⁹ Claims of good will juxtaposed with support for strong armed forces, support for negotiations contrasted with the need for a "tougher" negotiating posture, and general support for detente versus a willingness to listen to right wing reactionaries provided some of the targets for Soviet criticism.

As the Carter-Ford campaign proceeded, the Soviet media maintained that both candidates supported "American bossism in Europe," the "spread of (American) power and control," and negotiating "from positions of strength."¹⁰ Carter himself, while regularly applauded for his opposition to "excessive" military spending, continued to be criticized for his apparent movement toward the right on policy positions. Even Carter's moral commitments, praised during the primary campaigns by the Soviets, were attacked during the last phase of the election. While the Kremlin admitted "that the shafts of moral indignation which Carter shoots often hit their mark," this "by no means signif(ied) that the moral position of the Democratic candidate (was) unassailable." Instead, "whenever he passes from generalizations to political specifics, the smoke screens of moralizing maxims disappear, revealing the same old base (of bourgeois politics) which is well-known to everyone."¹¹ Carter's morality was thus nothing more than a political ploy designed to obtain votes.

The Soviet reaction to Carter's narrow victory was rather curious. While the Kremlin was uneasy because of Carter's perceived drift to the right during the final campaign, there were no indications that the Soviets expected deteriorated Soviet-American relations. Immediately after Carter's election, Soviet President Podgorny congratulated the President-elect, cabling him that the Soviet government hoped "to achieve further progress along this road (of improved relations) in the interests of the Soviet and US people."¹² Carter meanwhile confirmed his desire for improved Soviet-American relations during his first post-election press conference. The Soviet media gave prominent display to Carter's comments.

After the Carter administration took office, the Soviet Union at first refrained from commenting directly on the new administration's policy positions. This "honeymoon" period, if it may be termed that, is a privilege which the Soviet media regularly has accorded new presidents. As *New Times* said, "It will take several months . . . for the passions to subside and for the newly-elected incumbent of the White House to begin seriously shaping administration policy."¹³ Nonetheless, even in the months immediately after Carter took office, the Kremlin made extensive commentary on the forces which were influencing the new administration. It was clear that the Kremlin believed that a fundamental realignment of forces was occurring within American ruling circles.

Much of the alignment was precipitated by the "reactionary" forces in American society which were afraid the new administration intended to pursue detente more ardently. These circles, though somewhat weakened by the "continuing crisis of capitalism," still had "considerable resources" which they were expanding to undermine detente.¹⁴ More specifically, the "reactionaries" had the short-range goals of pressuring the Carter administration into adopting a "hard-line" with the Kremlin and of winning Carter's support for increased military spending.¹⁵

Carter's accession to power witnessed a revitalization of the "reactionaries" efforts to influence policy, at least as far as the Kremlin was concerned. Led by the "infamous military-industrial complex," the "reactionaries" sought to undermine detente by resurrecting the "myth of the Soviet threat" and by claiming that the Soviet Union infringed human rights.¹⁶ The first issue was rejected as a "fabrication" by no less a personage than Brezhnev in his mid-January speech at Tula, while the second issue was dismissed as "meddling in internal Soviet affairs"

and rejected as illustrative of an American "double standard."¹⁷ The Carter administration exhibited "a certain duality" throughout its words and deeds, Moscow reported.¹⁸

Thus, by March, the Soviet Union believed that right wing pressures were beginning to have an effect on American policy. While the Kremlin refrained from linking the Carter administration to the right wing of US politics, it was extremely evident that the new President was viewed as a malleable leader. Earlier, Moscow had cautioned that Carter's preferences for detente did "not mean that a straight and open road to agreements" had opened.¹⁹ By March, "reactionaries in both parties" had succeeded in intensifying "the struggle to preserve and further detente."²⁰ The "complex ins and outs of contemporary US political life," as *Pravda* termed it, had influenced Carter to turn away from certain of his campaign promises.

Even before Carter made his strategic weapons decisions, then, it was obvious that the Kremlin was increasingly uneasy about the policies the new president was adopting. With the Soviet perception that the American right was playing a larger role in the decisionmaking process of the Carter administration, it was perhaps to be expected that the Kremlin's skepticism about US policies would grow.

ASSESSING CARTER: VANCE'S MOSCOW TRIP

The "duality" which pervaded Carter's attitudes and policies was nowhere more apparent to the Soviets than in the strategic arms limitations proposals which Secretary of State Cyrus Vance presented on his March 26-30, 1977 trip to Moscow. Vance offered a comprehensive proposal which, among other things, limited strategic launch vehicles to 1800-2000, limited MIRV launchers to 1100-1200 and MIRVed ICBM's to 550, and banned the deployment of new ICBM's and modification of existing ICBM's. A second and more limited American proposal called for agreement on a ceiling of 2400 strategic bombers and missiles for each side, including 1320 missiles and bombers with MIRV capability, but set aside contentious issues such as the US cruise missile and the Soviet Backfire bomber.

The Soviets immediately and vocally rejected the proposals, claiming that both sought to achieve "unilateral American advantage." General Secretary Brezhnev termed the packages "inequitable,"²¹ and presented an alternative which limited cruise missile capabilities but not Backfire capabilities. The Soviet proposal was quickly rejected by the American side.²²

Apparently fearing that the American initiatives had cast them in an obstructionist role, the Soviet leaders launched the Russian equivalent of a media blitz decrying the US position. Although media coverage invariably reaffirmed the Kremlin's desire for progress in future negotiations, the American proposals were widely and severely castigated throughout Soviet literature and commentary. One of the more significant measures of Soviet sentiment was Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko's March 31 press conference.²³

Ostensibly held to dispel "rumors (that) do not accord with the actual state of affairs," the press conference presented an interesting picture of the Soviet leadership's perception of the just-concluded Vance visit. While Gromyko categorized Vance's visit as "useful," he at the same time severely criticized both American SALT proposals. One of the major problems with both proposals, according to Gromyko, was that neither contained sufficient control on cruise missile development. "Plugging one gap" with a SALT agreement was unsatisfactory, the Soviet Foreign Minister maintained, if "a new gap, maybe an even wider and deeper one, would be simultaneously opened—the manufacture of cruise missiles." Additionally, he claimed that cruise missiles as well as more traditional strategic delivery systems had been included in the limitations set forth by the Vladivostok Agreement, and that the American side was now seeking to change that understanding.

Gromyko assaulted other positions in the American proposals as well—inclusion of the "Backfire" as a strategic bomber, limitations on heavy ICBM's, and prohibition of new weapons systems, to name just a few. Gromyko's entire presentation left the impression that the Soviet leadership was convinced of the inequity of the American proposals, but at the same time realized that the US initiatives had placed the Kremlin on the defensive. Even more strikingly, the Soviets claimed that their positions had been "distorted" by the American side.

From the Soviet perspective, the American proposals could not even serve as a basis for future discussions.²⁴ The proposals were simply too one-sided. In purely military terms, Soviet opposition to the US position was understandable. By influencing the Soviet Union to develop its SLBM capabilities and by limiting ICBM and SLBM test flights to six per year, the comprehensive proposal would have effectively forced the USSR to deploy MIRVed SLBM's that were for all practical purposes untested.

Why, then, had Carter offered such "unrealistic" proposals? The Kremlin advanced a number of somewhat contradictory explanations.

First, the US proposals were indicative of increased influence of "Washington hawks" led by the military-industrial complex seeking to undermine detente. Carter had momentarily succumbed to their pressures, according to this view. Second, Carter had simply "blundered" by sending Vance to Moscow. This explanation implied Carter had acted on naivete, a theme which would later be developed more fully. Nonetheless, to the Soviets, this "blunder" had "played into the hands of the hawks."²⁵ Third, and another view which would be increasingly stressed in future months, was the observation that the United States was "trying to make big politics on cunning, on its striving to hoodwink the partner." This view stressed that "sincerity and honesty" were vital in negotiations.²⁶ The implication was that Carter himself was a clever politician who was seeking to balance the contending forces in American society to build a new consensus on which he could base policy. Even so, none of the divergent Soviet attitudes toward Carter directly criticized the President. Soviet assessments of him ran the gamut from "clever" to "naive," but in all cases, the Soviet commentary left the impression that American policy had not yet been locked into a particular course or direction. The Moscow discussions had given the Kremlin a glimpse of a different American approach to strategic weapons decisions, and the Kremlin was not particularly pleased with what it had seen.

With the Soviet Union having adopted the perception that American conservatives had increased their influence in Washington, and with the Kremlin's concomitant perception that the American SALT proposals were "not based on the principles of equality and identical security,"²⁷ it was not surprising that Moscow soon began to argue that the "inequitable" US proposals were designed to block progress toward a new agreement, thereby strengthening the position of those Americans who supported increased strategic weapons expenditures. Indeed, while *Pravda* merely speculated that the development of new US strategic weapons systems such as the cruise missile and B-1 bomber "could complicate Soviet-American negotiations even further,"²⁸ other Soviet sources were more explicit. According to *Izvestiia*, the US side was "adhering to its present unconstructive policy" precisely to permit the development of new strategic weapons systems.²⁹

Thus, as Carter prepared to make crucial decisions on strategic weapons questions which confronted him, the Soviet Union was predisposed to expect decisions that, from the Kremlin's perspective, accelerated the arms race and raised Soviet-American tension. In most cases, these expectations proved well-founded.

IMPACT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL
ON
SOVIET AND AMERICAN STRATEGIC FORCES

<u>Restriction</u>	<u>Impact on US</u>	<u>Impact on Soviet Union</u>
1. 1800-2000 Launchers	Cut 62-262	Cut 540-740
2. 1100-1200 MIRV Launchers	Add 54-154	Add 900-1000
3. 550 MIRV ICBMs	None	Add 350; channels Soviet MIRV programs to SLEM
4. 150 Heavy ICBMs	None	Cut 138
5. Ban Development and Deployment of New ICBMs and Mobile ICBMs	Stops MX	Stops New ICBMs including SS-16
6. Six ICBM and SLEM Flight Tests per year	Slows Trident I Stops Trident II Reduces Confidence in Systems	Slows ICBM and SLEM Reduces Confidence in Systems, particularly MIRVed SLEMs
7. Ban Changes in Current ICBMs	Stops MK 12A and others	Stops Missile Modifications
8. Limit Backfire Deployment	None	Prevents deployment in certain areas of USSR
9. No cruise missile with range over 2500 km. Only long-range bombers to carry 600-2500 km cruise missiles.	Cruise missiles up to 2500 km could be deployed in unlimited numbers.	None

Source: Adapted from Center for Defense Information, The Defense Monitor, Vol. 6, No. 5, July 1977, p.8.

THE STRATEGIC WEAPONS DECISIONS

Following Vance's Moscow trip, the Carter administration made a concerted effort to reconfirm the sincerity of its efforts to achieve a SALT II agreement. Addressing an April 15 news conference, Carter asserted that leaders of both the USSR and United States were doing their best to find a common ground that would protect each side's security interests. Other administration officials made similar comments. These assertions undoubtedly helped improve the atmosphere surrounding the May 18-20 meeting in Geneva between Vance and Gromyko. At the conclusion of the three-day session, a joint communique informed the world that progress had been made in developing a framework for further negotiations. Secretary Vance, seeking to present a balanced picture, cautioned that "serious difficulties" remained.

From the Soviet perspective, the progress which had been made at Geneva was inevitably qualified by American strategic weapons: decisions which were made immediately before and after the conference. On May 3, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown ordered the production of ten additional Minuteman III ICBM's, thereby postponing the shutdown of Minuteman III production lines. Later in the month, the Carter administration decided to deploy the MK 12A warhead. In addition, a new guidance system is being installed as of October 1977 and the warheads themselves are to be deployed beginning in 1979. MK 12A deployment will increase the yield of the Minuteman III.

Understandably, the Soviet Union was less than pleased by these decisions. However, Soviet reaction to both was surprisingly restrained. Continued Minuteman III production was merely denounced as a "concession to the military-industrial complex."³⁰ The MK 12A decision was more strongly criticized as a "trump card" through which the United States sought to achieve an advantage at the SALT negotiations.³¹

What accounted for the restrained Soviet response? Perhaps the most obvious cause was the fact that the Minuteman III actions were paralleled by similar activity in the Soviet Union. Thus, even though Moscow verbally abused both US actions, the similarity of the Soviet and American programs influenced Moscow to minimize its response.³²

Such considerations did not apply to the Soviet response to the decisions about B-1 and cruise missile development and deployment.

Carter announced his decisions to accelerate cruise missile development and not to begin series production of B-1 at a July 1 news conference. The Soviet response was almost instantaneous—United States was seeking a way around the SALT agreements; the negative B-1 decision was unimportant in relation to the cruise missile decision; and the American military-industrial complex had once again won a major political victory. Each of the Soviet responses is interesting enough in its own right to warrant closer examination.

Even before Carter opted to accelerate cruise missile development, Soviet sources had argued that the Pentagon had “rediscovered” the cruise missile to take advantage of a “loophole” in the SALT I agreement.³³ This implicit Soviet self-criticism of an earlier negotiating mistake was made even stronger by the Kremlin’s argument that the Soviet Union also could have developed a cruise missile but chose not to do so since it opposed opening additional channels in the arms race.³⁴ To the Soviets, then, the cruise missile decision had made a SALT agreement more difficult to achieve, and was yet another indication of American perfidy.

Carter’s decision not to begin series production of the B-1 was of little comfort to the Soviets when viewed in conjunction with the cruise missile decision. Quoting Jody Powell’s statement that the B-1 was not bad, but the cruise missile was better, the Soviet media concluded that the United States had simply adopted “the most rational and effective system.”³⁵ Indeed, when the United States later decided to improve FB-111 capabilities by equipping the plane with B-1 avionics, the Soviet Union maintained that even the limited benefits attendant to the negative B-1 decision had been further reduced.

Why did the Soviet Union interpret the negative B-1 and positive cruise missile decisions as a major political victory for the military-industrial complex? Despite the fact that the Kremlin expected a positive B-1 decision even to the eve of Carter’s press conference,³⁶ the Soviets maintained that the negative decision permitted the military-industrial complex to acquire the cruise missile as well as other upgraded systems such as the improved FB-111 and the neutron bomb. Thus, Carter’s B-1 decision not only enabled him to keep a campaign promise, but also to redistribute military funds, spreading them throughout the complex and consequently pleasing a larger segment of it.³⁷ All in all then, at least as far as the Kremlin was concerned, the objectives of the combined B-1-cruise missile decisions were to create the impression the United States was renouncing an important weapons

system unilaterally and hence gain political capital; to free funds for other weapons systems; and to please both the electorate and wider sections of the military-industrial complex.

Carter's decision to accelerate development of the cruise missile was closely followed by renewed efforts to develop and deploy an enhanced radiation weapon, or neutron bomb. Strictly speaking, the neutron bomb is a tactical rather than strategic weapon. However, in Soviet commentaries, it was (and is) often grouped with the cruise missile, B-1, ICBM, and other strategic weapons. Indeed, as we have already seen, the Soviets maintained that funds from the curtailed B-1 program would be diverted to develop and deploy the neutron weapon.

As might be expected, the Kremlin argued that the neutron bomb would lead to an accelerated arms race and further complicate the SALT negotiations.³⁸ The Kremlin posited that the weapon not only illustrated the perfidy of US claims that it wanted to reach an arms agreement, but also made the outbreak of war more likely since the neutron bomb blurred the distinction between conventional and nuclear warfare. If the quantity and content of Soviet commentary on the neutron bomb was any measure of Soviet sentiment on the weapon, then from the Soviet perspective, the neutron bomb ranked near the cruise missile as a significant addition to the arms race spiral.³⁹

However, in both instances, it must be realized that one reason that Soviet commentary may have been unrestrained was a lack of similar systems in the Soviet arsenal. It should be remembered that when the decision to deploy the MK 12A warhead was made, Soviet response was limited, possibly because of similar ongoing programs in the Soviet Union.

This rationale is strengthened by the Soviet reaction to Secretary of Defense Brown's October 6, 1977 request for 245 million dollars for fiscal 1979 to accelerate the MX mobile missile program. While Moscow condemned Brown's request, the Kremlin's response was on the whole low-keyed.⁴⁰ Again, the Soviet Union was already deploying a somewhat comparable mobile missile, the SS-16, and may have felt somewhat constrained to limit its criticism.

This is not to say, however, that the Soviet Union viewed the MX request as legitimate. Rather, two alternative Soviet viewpoints surfaced as to the timing of the funding request. On the one hand, the Kremlin regarded the MX request as a "bargaining chip" for the SALT negotiations. As a bargaining chip, the Soviets believed that the MX would complicate the course of negotiations. On the other hand, the

Kremlin argued that just as the Carter administration seemed to be "displaying a realistic approach" to SALT, the Pentagon "created a new obstacle." Brown's request was thus "a dangerous political provocation."⁴¹

In sum, then, it may be argued that the Soviet Union viewed Carter's strategic weapons decisions as being indicative of increased influence of the military-industrial complex in Washington, and as an effort on the part of the United States to achieve a "unilateral advantage" either sanctioned by a SALT agreement or acquired outside the mechanism of such an agreement. Indeed, in the wake of the various American strategic weapons decisions, certain Soviet sources noted the growth of "war hysteria" in the United States.⁴² While it may be legitimately argued that such Soviet sentiment is more polemic than actual, it cannot be denied that Carter's strategic weapons decisions left a strong imprint on the minds of Soviet decisionmakers.

CONCLUSIONS: SOVIET POLICY AND AMERICAN STRATEGIC WEAPONS

What, then, may be concluded about the Soviet reaction to American strategic weapons decisions during Carter's first year in office? It should come as no great revelation that the Soviet reactions were regularly predictable. US decisions to improve the quantity of weapons available were simply indications of "relapse into the old policy of American imperialism," according to the Kremlin.⁴³

Nonetheless, it was also apparent that comparability of Soviet and American systems also influenced Soviet reaction. If the contemplated American weapons action paralleled a Soviet program, Soviet reaction was restrained, though still negative. If the US decision did not parallel a Soviet program, the level of Soviet criticism increased.

At the same time, legitimate Soviet security concerns undoubtedly played a role in forming Soviet responses to US decisions. Soviet fears of a "one-sided American advantage" are clearly self-serving, at least to a degree, but it must also be remembered that from the Soviet perspective, the cruise missile, the neutron bomb, and the MX in particular all represent significant qualitative and quantitative improvements in the American strategic posture.

Even more forebodingly, at least to Moscow, these improvements were undertaken by a new administration which "takes its cues in many ways from reactionary circles."⁴⁴ To the Kremlin, these improvements

"cannot strengthen trust. They can only harm the healthy and strengthening seedlings of detente and mutual understanding between East and West."⁴⁵ Moscow's preconceptions of the Carter administration as a government willing to listen to and adopt the suggestions and policies of the so-called "reactionary elements" of US society must inevitably have influenced the Kremlin to impugn the most sinister motivations to US strategic arms decisions.

Following the September 22-23, 1977 meetings in Washington between Vance and Gromyko, a noticeable improvement in Soviet-American relations occurred, due in no small part to the "reassuring progress" that was made on SALT II.⁴⁶ Brezhnev himself in early November informed US Ambassador Toon that he was pleased with the progress that had been made on an agreement "in the recent past."⁴⁷ On the American side, President Carter noted his pleasure with a more cooperative Soviet attitude toward SALT. One *Pravda* article optimistically maintained that the two nations had "embarked on the road leading to an agreement."⁴⁸ Despite this optimism, however, additional difficulties cropped up and precluded an early SALT II agreement, most specifically the Soviet fear that US cruise missile technology would be transferred to America's NATO allies, thereby avoiding the terms of the projected SALT II agreement. Given the Soviet view of why the cruise missile itself was developed, this Soviet fear is perhaps "understandable."

Nonetheless, the question must be asked, what role have the US strategic weapons decisions, and the concomitant Soviet perceptions of them, had in the negotiations?

Realizing that any definitive answer must await conclusion of a SALT II agreement, it may nonetheless be argued that the Soviet Union detected not only an apparent American willingness to improve its own strategic arsenal, but also an apparent American ability to shift the onus of guilt for such an improvement (if it may be termed that) to the Soviet Union. Thus, the American decisions may have influenced the Soviet leadership to be more pliable in its negotiating posture. Soviet protests that "bargaining chip" strategies are not productive cannot be taken at face value; it is probable that such strategies do in fact influence the Soviet negotiating posture.

At the same time, however, it is equally naive to dismiss such Soviet warnings. In a way, the Soviet reaction to Carter's strategic weapons decisions has mirrored American reaction to earlier Soviet decisions. The cruise missile, neutron bomb, and MX have proven as disquieting to

the Soviet leadership as the SS-16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 were to the American leadership. US weapons decisions, while perhaps producing more Soviet pliability, have also opened the possibility for additional spirals in the arms race if legitimate Soviet security concerns cannot be accommodated within the fabric of a SALT II agreement. The problem for both nations, of course, is defining their respective legitimate security concerns in a manner which is comprehensible—and acceptable—to the potential opponent. And as this essay has illustrated, that is far from an easy task.

ENDNOTES

1. *The New York Times*, September 16, 1977.
2. See, for example, *Ibid.*, April 5, 1977.
3. Most of the following analysis relies on open Soviet publications. There are numerous difficulties with such methodology, not the least of which is distinguishing between perception and propaganda in Soviet media and official statements. These difficulties have been discussed in detail elsewhere (see, for example, Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-61*, New York, 1967, pp. 30-34), and will not be reiterated here. Suffice it to say that in any study of Soviet perceptions or motivations, a degree of subjectivity is inevitable. The author is aware of this; at the same time, the following should be read with this in mind.
4. For just a few of the numerous examples, see *Izvestiia*, June 30, 1976; *Nedelia*, No. 26, July 1976; and I. Andronov, "The Democrats Nominate Carter," *New Times*, No. 30, July 1976, p. 12.
5. *Izvestiia*, July 10, 1976; and I. Andronov, "Three Bids for the White House," *New Times*, No. 25, June, 1976, pp. 8-9.
6. S. Kondrashov, "Amerikanshie amplitudy," *Kommunist*, No. 15, October 1976, p. 125.
7. *Izvestiia*, June 20, 1976; and V. P. Zolotykhin, "Na puti v belyi dom," *SShA: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya*, No. 6, June 1976, pp. 22-23.
8. *Pravda*, July 27, 1976; and Radio Moscow, August 6, 1976.
9. *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 21, 1976. See also Andronov, No. 30, p. 13; *Izvestiia*, July 10, 1976; and *Pravda* July 16, 1976.
10. *Izvestiia*, October 29, 1976.
11. *Ibid.* and Radio Moscow, October 15, 1976.
12. *Pravda*, November 6, 1976.
13. I. Andronov, "Nearing the Finish," *New Times*, No. 43, October 1976, p. 9.
14. *Pravda*, January 20, 1977; and *Izvestiia*, February 25, 1977.
15. For a few of the many Soviet articulations of the twin goals of American reaction, see *Pravda*, January 11, 1977 and January 15, 1977; *Izvestiia*, January 14, 1977; *Krasnaia zvezda*, January 9, 1977 and January 23, 1977; and *Za rubezhom*, No. 2, January 1977.
16. These claims were made on a regular basis by almost every issue of leading Soviet journals and newspapers during January and February, 1977.
17. For example, see *Izvestiia*, March 17, 1977; and *Za Rubezhom*, No. 12, March 1977.
18. *Pravda*, March 13, 1977. See also V. Berezhkov, "A Constructive Approach is Necessary," *SShA: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya*, No. 5, May 1977, p. 52.
19. *Za rubezhom*, No. 5, January 1977.
20. V. Chernyshov, "At the Start of a Presidency," *New Times*, No. 5, January 1977, p. 9; and William Jackson, "US Hawk Step up Activities," *World Marxist Review*, No. 3, March 1977, p. 30.
21. *The New York Times*, March 31, 1977.
22. It should be noted that the Russian counterproposal was identical to one presented to and rejected by the Ford administration some time earlier.

23. See "Andrei Gromyko's March 31 Press Conference," *International Affairs (Moscow)*, No. 5, May 1977, pp. 1-11.
24. *Pravda*, April 14, 1977.
25. G. Victoroy and M. Chernousev, "Hawks on the Warpath," *New Times*, No. 16, April 1977, pp. 12-13.
26. *Izvestiia*, April 3, 1977.
27. I. Bagramyan, "Soviet Military Science and the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland," *Kommunist*, No. 7, May 1977, translated in JPRS 69251, p. 89. See also *Krasnaia zvezda*, April 10, 1977.
28. *Pravda*, April 28, 1977.
29. *Izvestiia*, June 25, 1977. For further development of this theme, see for example, *Izvestiia*, April 9, 1977; and *Za Rubezhom*, No. 21, May 1977.
30. Radio Moscow to North America, May 4, 1977, in *FBIS Daily Report Soviet Union*, May 5, 1977, p. B3.
31. *Pravda*, June 9, 1977. See also Radio Moscow to North America, June 1977, in *FBIS Daily Report (Soviet Union)*, June 10, 1977, p. AAl.
32. It is interesting to note that the Soviets made little or no comment on Press Secretary Jody Powell's June 1 statement that the US might alter its deployment plans for the MK 12A if the Soviet Union began serious negotiations to limit strategic arms. Later, when it was implied that the cruise missile, the neutron bomb, or the MX mobile missile may serve as SALT "bargaining chips," the Soviet reaction was vehement.
33. *Krasnaia zvezda*, April 21, 1977; *Nedelya*, No. 14, April 1977, in *FBIS Daily Report (Soviet Union)*, April 15, 1977, p. AA2; and *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, June 1, 1977.
34. *Krasnaia zvezda*, April 21, 1977.
35. *Pravda*, July 9, 1977; TASS, July 1, 1977, in *FBIS Daily Report (Soviet Union)*, July 5, 1977; and V. Kuznetsov, "The Insatiable Pentagon," *New Times*, No. 29, July 1977, p. 9.
36. See, for example, *Pravda*, June 29, 1977; and *Izvestiia*, July 1, 1977. Most Washington observers also expected Carter to accept at least partial series production of the B-1.
37. For further discussion of all or part of this Soviet line of thought, see *Pravda*, July 3, 1977; *Izvestiia*, July 16, 1977; and *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, September 10, 1977.
38. See, for example, *Pravda*, July 21, 1977; *Krasnaia zvezda*, July 17, 1977; August 14, 1977; and September 7, 1977; and *Za Rubezhom*, No. 29, July 1977.
39. *Izvestiia*, August 6, 1977 and August 30, 1977. Soviet vocal opposition of the neutron bomb reached a crescendo in March 1978 as the time neared for Carter to make a decision on the weapon. The well-orchestrated Soviet campaign against the weapon was led by Brezhnev himself.
40. For samplings of the Soviet response, see *Krasnaia zvezda*, October 7, 1977; and *Pravda*, October 14, 1977.
41. *Pravda*, October 14, 1977; and *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, November 1, 1977. See also *Za Rubezhom*, No. 43, October 1977.
42. *Pravda*, September 8, 1977; and *Za Rubezhom*, No. 39, September 1977.
43. *Pravda*, July 10, 1977.
44. G. Svyatov, "Endless Zigzags," *New Times*, No. 32, August 1977, p. 11.
45. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, August 16, 1977.

46. *Izvestia*, November 17, 1977.
47. Soviet Domestic Service, November 9, 1977, in *FBIS Daily Report (Soviet Union)*, November 9, 1977, p. AA2.
48. *Pravda*, October 16, 1977.

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) After first presenting an overview of the Soviet perception of President Carter, this memorandum examines the Soviet reaction to several of President Carter's 1977 strategic weapons decisions. The author concludes that the Kremlin's reactions to those decisions were conditioned by a number of factors including legitimate Soviet security concerns, the availability or nonavailability of roughly comparable systems within the Soviet arsenal, and, from the Soviet perspective, a resurgence of "reactionary elements" within the US poli-		

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tical arena. He asserts that, in certain respects, the American decisions may have influenced the Soviet leadership to be more pliable in its bargaining positions, but have also opened possibilities for additional spirals in the strategic arms race.

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